

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
TRSE-00 OMB-01 /065 W
-----030371 120240Z /75

R 101125Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3309
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMCONSUL MADRAS
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJECT: IT RAINS ON MRS. GANDHI'S PARADE

REF: NEW DELHI 11882

1. THROUGHOUT MUCH OF INDIA THE CONGRESS (I)'S "SAVE INDIA DAY" ON AUGUST 9 TURNED OUT TO BE A DAMP, BUT GENERALLY ORDERLY AFFAIR. THE MAIN FOCUS OF MRS. GANDHI'S PROTEST MOVEMENT AGAINST ALLEGED FAILURES AND MISRULE OF THE JANATA GOVERNMENT WAS IN DELHI, WHERE THE ORGANIZERS HAD PLANNED A MARCH AND A MASSIVE RALLY ON THE CENTRAL MALL NEAR PARLIAMENT HOUSE. HOWEVER, UNUSUALLY HEAVY RAINS (THE HEAVIEST IN 17 YEARS, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ACCORDING TO NEWSPAPERS) DISRUPTED THESE PLANS AND ALMOST WASHED OUT THE RALLY. THE CONGRESS (I) LEADERSHIP CANCELLED THE RALLY IN THE MORNING AFTER HOURS OF INCESSANT RAIN HAD TURNED MUCH OF THE CAPITAL INTO A BOG. AFTER NOON, HOWEVER, THE RAIN STOPPED AND MRS. GANDHI RUSHED OVER TO THE CENTRAL MALL TO ADDRESS WHAT CROWDS WERE PRESENT. BY THAT TIME, MANY OF THE CONGRESS (I) WORKERS HAD ALREADY LEFT. THE ASSEMBLED

CROWD, WHICH INCLUDED MANY GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ON THEIR LUNCH BREAK, WAS ESTIMATED TO NUMBER BETWEEN TWO AND FIVE THOUSAND PERSONS.

2. MRS. GANDHI'S REMARKS TO THE CROWD COMPRISED FAMILIAR INDIRA RHETORIC. SHE ATTACKED THE JANATA GOVERNMENT ON A VARIETY OF ISSUES: DETERIORATING LAW AND ORDER, ATROCITIES ON HARIJANS, RISING PRICES, INTIMIDATION OF GOVERNMENT WORKERS, AND GENERAL INDIFFERENCE TO THE PLIGHT OF THE "WEAKER SECTIONS." SHE SAID THAT ALL THE ADVANCES ACHIEVED UNDER 30 YEARS OF CONGRESS RULE WERE BEING UNDONE BY THE JANATA. LATER IN THE DAY, A DELEGATION OF CONGRESS (I) LEADERS CALLED ON PRESIDENT SANJIVA REDDY AND PRESENTED TO HIM A MEMORANDUM CONTAINING THE SAME CHARGES.

3. ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY, "SAVE INDIA DAY" DEMONSTRATIONS WERE ALSO DISRUPTED BY MONSOON RAINS BUT PROTEST MARCHES AND RALLIES TO HIGHLIGHT JANATA "MISRULE" OCCURED IN MOST MAJOR CITIES AND TOWNS. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, MOST OF THE CROWDS WERE GENERALLY SMALL TO MODERATE IN SIZE, RANGING FROM SEVERAL HUNDRED TO THREE TO FOUR THOUSAND CONGRESS (I) DEMONSTRATORS. ON THE WHOLE, THE DEMONSTRATIONS WERE PEACEFUL, ALTHOUGH MINOR SCUFFLES WERE REPORTED IN KERALA, AHMEDABAD AND MEERUT (U.P.). IN ADDITION, SOME CONGRESS (I) WORKERS WERE ARRESTED (AND SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED) IN SEVERAL LOCALITIES FOR VIOLATING BANS ON PROCESSIONS.

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4. MRS. GANDHI MADE IT CLEAR TO NEWSMEN ON AUGUST 9 THAT "SAVE INDIA DAY" WOULD NOT BE A ONE-DAY AFFAIR. BY LAUNCHING HER MOVEMENT ON THE 36TH ANNIVERSARY OF MAHATMA GANDHI'S "QUIT INDIA" STRUGGLE, MRS. GANDHI HAS SOUGHT TO EQUATE HER AGITATION WITH THE MAHATMA'S AND HAS SAID THAT AUGUST 9 WOULD BE THE OPENING DAY OF A PROLONGED MOVEMENT TO HIGHLIGHT THE JANATA'S FAILURES AND THE MISEREIS OF THE PEOPLE.

GOHEEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NEWDE12201
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780329-1067
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780878/aaaacnee.tel
Line Count: 103
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 48ca5b65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 NEW DELHI 11882
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1778962
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IT RAINS ON MRS. GANDHI'S PARADE
TAGS: PINT, IN, (GANDHI, INDIRA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/48ca5b65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014